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Physical Education

A Performance Checklist

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How good is the physical education program in your child's school? It's possible – even likely – that you've never asked yourself that question before. Some parents tend to take physical education for granted, and others simply don't consider it important enough to merit concern. They are vitally concerned about the three R's – Reading, 'Riting and 'Rithmatic – but they don't realize that the fourth R, *Regular* Physical Activity, is just as important.

That attitude is reflected in the poor physical condition of much of today's youth. Recent reports indicate that American children and adolescents aren't getting enough vigorous activity to develop a healthy heart and lungs, and fewer young people are able to achieve minimum standards of fitness than in past surveys.

The problem is twofold:

■ Only one child in three participates in a daily program of physical education (at least one school period of vigorous physical activity) as recommended by the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports and leading medical authorities, and some have no programs at all.

■ Some schools place little emphasis on activities that develop physical fitness and useful skills.

What about your children? Are they getting the kind of physical education that they need? The answer is important to their future – physically fit young people are likely to grow up to be physically fit adults.

Regular, vigorous exercise is essential to physical and emotional development, and studies show that children's self-confidence and self-mastery grow as their fitness level rises. Childhood experiences also help shape adult behavior. The boy or girl who develops skills and learns to enjoy physical activity has a headstart on good health and happiness throughout life.

This pamphlet is designed to help you assess the quality of the physical education program in your schools. You owe it to yourself and your child to know the answer.

READEX FICHE

THE OTHER HALF OF EDUCATION

Physical education has been called "the other half of education."

Most school subjects are designed to train the mind, but physical education helps students develop and learn to use their bodies. Since physical education is the only subject that concerns itself with the complex organism that houses and supports the mind, its importance should be evident.

Basically, physical education in the school has three objectives:

- To produce physically fit youth;
- To educate young people concerning the essential nature of physical activity and its relationship to health, physical fitness and a more dynamic, productive life;
- To give students the skills, knowledge and motivation to remain fit.

How does your child's program measure up?

The checklist in the next section has been prepared to help you find out. If you can answer "yes" to each of the questions asked, the program probably is a good one. If not, you will want to see what can be done to strengthen the program.

Remember: Your child has a right to good health and fitness. Exercise it!

A PERFORMANCE CHECKLIST FOR YOUR SCHOOLS

Not all good physical education programs are exactly alike, but experience has shown that those which fulfill the three objectives described in the previous section tend to have certain features in common. These are reflected in the checklist that follows.

We urge you to check the program in your school against this yardstick. Your interest could make the difference between a program that meets your child's needs and one that falls short.

A PERFORMANCE CHECKLIST

YES	NO	
☐	☐	Physical fitness is not a part-time thing. Does your school provide at least one period per day of instruction in vigorous physical activity?
☐	☐	Play alone won't develop physical fitness. Is a part of each physical education period devoted to activities like running, calisthenics, agility drills and weight training?
☐	☐	Skill in sport is a valuable social and health asset. Does your school program offer instruction in lifetime sports like tennis, swimming, golf, skiing and jogging?
☐	☐	Most physical problems can be alleviated if discovered early enough. Does the school give a screening test to identify those students who are weak, inflexible, overweight, or lacking in coordination?
☐	☐	All children can improve with help. Are there special physical education programs for students with special problems, such as the retarded, the handicapped, and the underdeveloped?
☐	☐	Testing is important to measure achievement. Are all students tested in physical fitness at least twice a year?

What to do to change the "No" answers to "Yes" —

First: Make sure you know what your local school code says about physical education, and what is specified in state laws or regulations.

Then:

1. Speak to the physical education instructor in your child's school. You will find him or her very cooperative and willing to answer your questions.

2. If the physical education instructor can't help, speak to the school principal.

3. If significant changes are needed in the school's priorities or scheduling, try to encourage your parent/teacher organization to support a regular physical education program with an adequate emphasis on physical fitness.

4. If the problem is one of policy in the entire school district, take up the issue with your local Board of Education.

5. If your school is doing all it can at this time, make certain your child gets at least one-half hour of vigorous physical activity every day before or after school.

For additional information or help in setting up a program of vigorous physical activity for your child write:

THE PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL ON
PHYSICAL FITNESS AND SPORTS
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